



Monday 2nd September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

I am sure you are all aware that the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced new statutory guidance with regards to school attendance. I am taking this opportunity to make you aware of some of the changes and what this means for parents, pupils and schools. 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Statutory Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities applies from **19th August 2024**.

Our School Attendance and Punctuality Policy will be updated to reflect the changes detailed above. This will be shared with you and uploaded onto our website as soon as it is available.

- It highlights the expectation for improved working partnerships between schools and parents and its link with improved attendance and outcomes for all pupils.
- It reflects changes to the law on school attendance registers, granting leave of absence and attendance codes to be used. School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024.
- There is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices which reflects changes to the law (Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Attendance Contracts will be introduced to support improved attendance.
- Data sharing: Introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Schools, local authorities and DfE have access to near-live data from all state funded schools from the beginning of next school year.

The National Framework for issuing penalty notices aims to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England. There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England for **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence** within a rolling **10 school week period**.

- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (codes G, O or U).
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years. For example, 2 sessions, (1 school day) of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 sessions, (4 school days) within the autumn term.
- Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
- An increase to the rate of a Fixed Penalty Notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. The Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child that was absent. E.g. Three siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving three separate fines.
- If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- If a third offence is committed, a Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.
- Formal requests for leave of absence must be made in advance and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The DfE are clear that leave for recreational or leisure purposes are not considered exceptional, will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to legal action.
- The local authority is in the process of consulting with schools and partner agencies to develop a revised local code of conduct. This document will be shared with schools.

Good attendance and punctuality is essential to support your child in getting the most out of their education and we thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Ange Cartwright
Head of School

Rachel Mollett
Executive Headteacher

Attendance Ladder

